

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 /014 W

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R 270926Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1588

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 1084

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF, BC, WZ, LT, PINR, EALR, EFIN, ENRG, ETRD, MILI

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN IMPORTS OF ARMS AND OIL

REF: A) PRETORIA 5248 (B) STATE 56680

1. APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS (REF B), WHICH ARE WELL FOUNDED.
 2. BELIEVE OUR APPROACH IS BASICALLY SOUND BUT NEEDS ELABORATION. WE SUBMIT FOLLOWING FOR DEPARTMENT'S COMMENT.
 3. ERROR IN REF (A) CAUSED BY USING SEVEN MONTH RATHER THAN SIX MONTH FIGURES FROM TABLE S-58. SIX MONTH FIGURE IS INDEED 2,242 MILLION RAND.
 4. SMALL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS AND CUSTOMS AND EXICSE FIGURES WOULD SEEM TO PUT IN DOUBT THE ASSURANCES FROM THE RESERVE BANK THAT THEIR IMPORT FIGURES INCLUDE ARMS AND OIL. ANSWER SEEMS TO BE (AND FOOTNOTE TO S-58 IN SEPTEMBER BULLETIN SUPPORTS IDEA) THAT ARMS AND OIL INCLUDED IN QUARTERLY FIGURES (TABLE S-56 OF SEPTEMBER BULLETIN) BUT NOT IN MONTHLY (S-58). S-56 SHOWS 2,546 MILLION FOR FIRST HALF OF 1974, OR 327 MILLION MORE THAN CUSTOMS AND EXCISE.
 4. SO, RETURNING TO SQUARE ONE AND USING THE MARCH, 1975 QUARTERLY BULLETIN, WE HAVE A RESERVE BANK FUGURE (TABLE S-57
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IN MARCH ISSUE) OF 5,737 MILLION FOR 1974. THE CUSTOMS AND

EXCISE FIGURE IS 4,914 MILLION, SO THE DIFFERENCE IS 823 MILLION.

5. THIS LOOKS LIKE A LOGICAL FIGURE. IF SOUTH AFRICA SPENT SOMETHING LESS THAN 700 MILLION FOR OIL IN 1974, THESE FIGURES WOULD INDICATE AN EXPENDITURE OF SOMETHING OVER 123 MILLION FOR ARMS AND IMPORTS, OUT OF A 1974/75 TOTAL DEFENSE BUDGET OF 702 MILLION.

6. WE FIND THE MATTER INTRIGUING AND BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VALUABLE TO HAVE A SOLID ANSWER. WE WILL PURSUE QUESTION AGAIN AFTER RECEIVING DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS ON ABOVE.
HURD

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